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September 7, 2005

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Preliminary Examination AuthorityRe.: PCT International Application No. PCT/EP2004/009973
filed on September 7, 2004
in the name of URETEK S.r.l.
Our Ref.: 38735/RI/rf

Dear Sirs,

This is in response to the Written Opinion of the International Searching
Authority (PCT Rule 43bis1) dated 06.12.2004.In agreement with the new PCT procedure with effect as from 1 Jan.
2004, a demand has been filed by the applicant for which the receipt date of
06/06/2005 has been notified by the Notification dated 10.06.2005.The 22-months deadline from the priority date of 07.11.2003 is due to
expire on 07.09.2005.Accordingly, the present arguments and amendments, submitted under
Art. 34 and Rules 66.1 and 66.1bis PCT are deemed to be filed in time for an
IPER based thereon to be established.The Examiner's comments and objections and the cited prior art
documents have been carefully considered.

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Amendments, in accordance with Rule 66.8 PCT, by way of replacement sheets numbered as pages 29-39 and comprising hand amended claims 1-72 are herewith submitted for substitution of original pages 29-39 containing the original claims 1-72, respectively. Further replacement description sheets 6 and 6a are also hereby submitted for substitution of the original page 6.

The description page 6 has been amended by insertion of the new paragraph of page 6a that acknowledges the prior art of documents D1= Patent Abstract of Japan vol. 0180, no 44, 24 Jan. 1994 & JP 5 272126A(Okabe Co Ltd), D2 = EP-A-0 851 064, D3= EP-A- 1 314 824, D4= GB 2 135 721 A, D5= Patent Abstract of Japan vol. 0176, no. 67 (09.12.1993) & JP 5 222717 (Okabe Co Ltd and D6 = Patent Abstracts of Japan vol. 0145, no. 19 (14.12.1990) & JP 2 217518 (Shimizu Corp.).

The amendment to the claims regard introduction of reference numerals, in particular in claims 1 and 23, for clarity reasons and reviewing of the claim dependency.

In view of the "Whenever appropriate" criterion established by Rule 6.3 (b), applicant considered that claim 1 more clearly defines the matter for which protection is sought if written in the original (not two-part) form.

This is also because, as will be set forth hereinafter, none of the cited prior art documents regards a soil strength increasing method for containing and supporting excavation faces.

Article 33.2 and Rule 64.1-3 PCT

It is submitted that original claim 1, in the applicant's view, met the requirements of Article 6 and Rule 6.2- 6.3 PCT with respect to D1, and to each of the other cited prior documents.

D1 teaches how to perform a ground consolidation hole 23, shown drilled substantially horizontal or slightly inclined with respect to the horizontal plane in a vertical face, with the mouth sealed 26, having a hollow rod 1 therein and being filled with foamed-hardened urethane. The purpose of such sole hole is stated to be that to consolidate and improve the natural ground.

D5 teaches a similar filled hole 1.

D2 - D4 teach load bearing capacity improvement for subsided or loose soil masses.

D6 teaches a reinforcement technique based on application of a plastic material grid 5 supported on earth inserted bolts 4 and covered with mortar 6.